

County of San Luis Obispo

HEALTH COMMISSION

Minutes of Meeting

Monday, May 8, 2006 (Board of Supervisors Chambers)

Members Present: Lynn Enns (Chair), Penny Chamousis, Deborah Donnelly, Pam Heatherington, Jan Hicks, Sara Horne, James Mase, M.D., David Odell, Donald Pinkel, M.D.

Members Absent: Tom Hale, M.D., Susan Warren

Staff Present: Greg Thomas, M.D., Jean White (recorder)

Speakers: Allison Jones (Regional Water Quality Control Board); Lynn Enns, Robert Robbins, M.D., Scott Steinmaus, Ph.D, Ralph Jacobson, Ph.D, Michael Broadhurst, Ph.D (GMO Task Force Members)

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action	Who/When
1. CALL TO ORDER	Meeting called to order by Chair Enns at 6:05 p.m. Bob Lloyd from AGP Video announced that an audio archive of County meetings is available at www.slospan.org .		
2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: April 10, 2006	Dr. Thomas made correction to Page 3, Grand Jury Report discussion. Minutes state "Dr. Thomas agrees to meet once per year for a superficial report..." Minutes should be corrected to read: "Dr. Thomas agreed to pass on the concerns from the Health Commission regarding meeting once per year, and therefore recommended a more in-depth report every three years."	Minutes approved as amended.	1 st – Horne 2 nd – Heatherington Approved – All
3. PUBLIC COMMENT	Eric Greening attended the Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday, May 2 nd , where the Board responded to the Grand Jury Report on Pesticide Use at the agricultural/urban interface. Mr. Greening would like to see more focus on urban use of pesticides and the effects on residences. He is also concerned about the reluctance to implement recommendation #1, which recognizes the authority of the Montreal Protocol in relation to methyl bromide. He wanted to make sure the Health Commission was "in the loop" regarding the Grand Jury Report. Mark Phillips, Atascadero referred to Dr. Kusti's research work as a scientist with regard to GE foods and those who have tried to discredit him. He contacted Dr. Kusti and asked him to respond to some of the charges against his research. He was very impressed with Dr. Kusti's rebuttals, but the GE Task Force was not responsive. He noted that GE lobbyists are working on preemption laws at the state level that would overrule local ordinances such as the one that Mendocino has. He believes that the system is set up to work in the interest of large corporations.		
4. AGRICULTURAL WATER QUALITY REGULATION UPDATE	Allison Jones, Central Coast Water Board , is the lead staff on new regulations for commercial irrigated operations in the Central Coast region. The Central Coast region runs from part of San Mateo County into part of Ventura County and has an estimated 2500 farming operations, with 2/3 under 50 acres. Each region has authority to adopt its own regulations. Before the regulations came into effect, they were already aware of significant problems associated with nitrate problems in		

	<p>surface water and ground water in agricultural waters. They convened an advisory panel of agricultural and environmental groups throughout the region for consensus on recommendations. Panel recommendations: Tiered program with less reporting for those who have met all requirements, 15 hours of water quality education over 3 years, on-site farm plans, and monitoring that focuses on currently applied constituents. Waiver conditions were adopted July 4, 2004; they have 90% enrollment and approximately ½ have completed their farm plan.</p> <p><i>Commissioner Heatherington asked about Phase II site locations and requested a list of the creeks that they are watching. Commissioner Pinkel asked if they were looking at heavy metals and pesticides. (They are looking at toxicity and what is causing the toxicity, with focus primarily on input from fertilizers and pesticides, not heavy metals.)</i></p> <p>Public Comment: Eric Greening asked about the process used when they are aware of a problem in the surface waters to prevent contamination into the ground water, and if they work with soil hydrologists. <i>(They try to control surface water discharge as much as possible and recognize the interplay, which would fall under this program).</i></p> <p>Jesse Arnold, Cambria, asked if organic farms are tested and if they can see any differences in pollution levels. <i>(They check for single and/or multiple sources of contributors.)</i></p>		
5. GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS (GMO) TASK FORCE REPORT	<p>A written report "<i>GMO Task Force Report to Health Commission</i>" was compiled by the Task Force and distributed to the Health Commissioners. The report is available at www.slopublichealth.org. Hard copies can be made available to those who do not have electronic access. The GMO Task Force members presented a Power Point overview of the report:</p> <p>Lynn Enns, Chair of the GMO Task Force, introduced the presentation and reminded everyone of the mission, goals and objectives of the GMO Task Force. She talked about the method used to accomplish the objectives of the task force and outlined the concerns raised by the public. The report is organized by the following sections: <i>Introduction; Government Regulations, Laws, and Standards; Standardization of Testing Protocols and Compliance Review; General Distrust of Transgenic Science; Allgernicity and Unintended Effects; Nutrition and GM Foods; NAS Report "Safety of Genetically Engineered Foods"; What have other Counties in California done.</i></p> <p>Robert Robbins, M.D., presented an overview of Section 2 of the report, by reading pages 5 through 12. This section addressed government regulations, laws and standards of transgenic foods. FDA relies on two sections of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (FD&C) to govern both traditional and bioengineered foods.</p>	<p><i>Handouts:</i> <i>Copy of GMO Task Force Report to Health Commission</i></p> <p><i>Copy of GMO Task Force Reference Library</i></p> <p><i>Copy of GMO Task Force Power Point Presentation</i></p> <p><i>Reference to:</i> <i>Box of GMO Task Force Archived Reports - to be stored at Public Health Department</i></p> <p><i>For a copy of the final report go to:</i> www.slopublichealth.org <i>(health commission page)</i></p>	

Scott Steinmaus, Ph.D., continued the presentation with an overview of Section 3: "Standardization of Testing Protocols and Compliance Review," Section 4: "General Distrust of Transgenic Science," and Section 5: "Allergenicity, Unintended Effects, and Antibiotic Markers." The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) have areas of responsibility for regulation of transgenic products. The regulatory process is quite involved, with nine steps in the U.S. governmental safety evaluation of food. The report highlights those steps that have a process for public input. Dr. Steinmaus talked about some of the distrust of transgenic science and addressed some of the issues raised by the public during their meetings, including the Psutai issue, David Schubert's publication, allergenicity and unintended effects, and horizontal gene transfer.

Ralph Jacobson, Ph.D. talked about the nutritional aspects of genetically modified foods. Nutritional studies are very complex and difficult to perform. Acute effects are relatively easy to see. Long-term effects can be very subtle. Tracing a "new" disease problem to specific causes is difficult to do. Traditional foods and those modified by traditional methods are rarely tested. What is specific and unique due to genetic modification is where the concentration needs to be. Concerns specific to SLO County are that we cannot keep foods from other areas from entering the County, and labeling, especially for allergens and problem metabolites is already required and must be enforced. It was recommended that Health Commission's Community Education Committee work with them to develop educational pamphlets and workshops.

Michael Broadhurst, Ph.D. talked about the NAS Report (National Academies "Safety of Genetically Engineered Foods: Approaches to Assessing Unintended Health Effects"), a project supported by the US Department of Health and Human Services Food and Drug Administration, the US Department of Agriculture and the US Environmental Protection Agency. The committee was made up of members from the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering and the Institute of Medicine. Their report details the issues surrounding genetically modified foods, not just those from genetic engineering, but from other methods such as conventional breeding and mutation methods. The purpose of the report was to develop recommendations for improved methods of testing GM crops and foods for possible unintended health effects. Dr. Broadhurst talked about segregation issues, allergen concerns and risk assessment vs. precaution. It is impossible to demonstrate absolute safety, the question will always be where is the balance.

Lynn Enns concluded the presentation by thanking the task force members and listing the counties that have passed anti-GMO ordinances (3 counties), counties where anti-GMO issues have been defeated (4 counties) and counties that have

passed Pro-GMO resolutions at their Boards of Supervisors (13 counties). This is a highly complex science that may affect health in a variety of positive and negative aspects. The final reports is available at www.slopublichealth.org (health commission; meeting minutes; GMO Task Force)

Public Comment:

Mike Zelina, Cambria agrees with most of the report given today. His only concern is that there may have been some things omitted from the report with regards to a USDA report that came out earlier this year. He recommended giving the public time to read the report and then bring back for further comments. *Commissioner Heatherington requested a copy of the USDA report for the Health Commission.*

Eric Greening agrees with the continuance of this item to give the public time to review the report. His concerns are not having a regulatory process in place to enforce buffers and segregation and that there is no science to tell what an adequate buffer is by either a risk assessment standard or a precautionary standard.

Mark Phillips echoed the request that this discussion be brought forward after everyone has had a chance to review the report. He further requested that SLO GE Free be given an opportunity to respond, other than through the 3-minute public comment period. His concerns are with how APHIS is handling requests for test plots and monitoring them.

Jackie Crabb, speaking on behalf of the Farm Bureau, commended the members of the GMO Task Force for their hard work and dedication to stay on task even with personal attacks that were unfairly aimed at them and perceived conspiracies to undermine their efforts. She thanked the Task Force members for a valuable presentation and the Health Commission for providing the opportunity.

Teresa Campbell, Cambria, noted that every food that is packaged, canned, or bottled has genetically engineered ingredients in it. She is concerned about the health impacts and emphasized the importance of educating the community.

Karen Mansfield, Executive Manager of SLO County Agricultural Task Force, thanked the Task Force members for volunteering their time and the efforts they made toward this difficult task.

Elizabeth Johnson, San Luis Obispo, expressed her disappointment with the representation of membership on the Task Force. She has asked the Health Commission to publicly answer who picked the original Task Force and what criteria were used for selection. Her written public comment is filed with the official record of this meeting.

*Handout:
Copy of written public
comment*

	<p>Jesse Arnold, Cambria, thanked the GMO Task Force for their report and suggested the commission bring the item back in July or August. The Ag Commissioner's report will be going to the Board on Tuesday, 8/22; he suggested the Health Commission may want to bring forward a report at the same time. He commented on the difficulty of regulating GE crops, when nobody has to report if they are growing a GE crop. The only GE crop he knows of that is labeled is <i>golden rice</i>, which no country has accepted.</p> <p><u>Commissioner Discussion:</u> Commissioner Heatherington thanked the Task Force and also thanked the public that attended the meetings. She recommended that the Health Commission take time to review the report and bring back in July/August for further discussion. It was agreed that the item would be brought back for discussion at the August meeting for possible action / possible recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.</p>		
6. PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT REPORT	<p>Dr. Thomas thanked the GMO Task Force members. He referred to his written report; a copy is filed with the official record of this meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pandemic/Avian Flu Planning: Dr. Thomas invited health commissioners to attend a community-wide summit on June 23rd. More information will be provided next month. • Health Agency reorganization will go forward to the Board at the Budget Hearings in June. The biggest change is a fiscal/administrative division of the Health Agency, reporting to a Deputy Director. • Jeff Hamm, Health Agency Director will be starting on May 15th. • Medical Marijuana Cards: SB420 directed the State DHS to develop an identification card system. The State has finished their protocols and turned them over to county health departments to move forward. An implementation plan will be brought forward to the Board in the next month or so. • 2006 County Health Status Profile: Can be brought forward for more detailed discussion in August or September, along with <i>Paradox in Paradise</i> report. <i>Commissioner Heatherington suggested discussing the County Health Status Profiles at the retreat in July.</i> 	Handouts: <i>Copy of Director's Report</i>	
7. HEALTH COMMISSION UPDATES	<p>CHAIR UPDATE: Chair Enns: Letters were sent regarding the legislation voted on at last month's meeting. Dr. Pinkel drafted a letter regarding fluoridation of water that will be sent to the Board of Supervisors and water districts next week. Chair Enns spoke to the newspaper about getting meeting notifications in the newspaper. She was told that they usually only list bodies that have regulatory authority. The Health Reporter at the Tribune suggested the agenda be emailed to the Health Reporter email address.</p> <p>COMMISSIONER UPDATES: Commissioner Pinkel: No report Commissioner Heatherington: No report</p>		

	<p>Commissioner Mase: No report</p> <p>Commissioner Odell: Mental Health Act funds have been approved and will go forward to the Board of Supervisors on May 16h. This is a new set of funds for new programs and cannot be used to supplant current programs.</p> <p>Commissioner Chamousis: No report.</p> <p>Commissioner Hicks: No report</p> <p>Commissioner Horne: Attended Children's Services Network last month. Candidates from two supervisor districts and the Sheriff were in attendance as part of a "candidate forum."</p> <p>Commissioner Donelly: No report</p>		
8. COMMITTEE REPORTS	<p><u>Legislative:</u> Commissioner Heatherington forwarded the name of a contact person to speak on SB 840 (possibly at the August meeting). Commissioner Horne attended a conference on this and noted the timeframe given would allow the Commission to schedule this later than August.</p> <p><u>Nominating:</u> Commissioner Hicks thanked Sonja Thompson for her efficient work on setting up the interviews. Eight interviews have been scheduled for Monday, May 15th, 1-5. Commissioner Hicks reminded reapplying commissioners to answer the three required questions. Commissioner Hicks asked commissioners to email nominations for new officers. The nominating committee will bring these items forward to the next meeting for action.</p> <p><u>Budget:</u> No report</p> <p><u>Community Education:</u> Commissioner Heatherington noted that "how to get meeting notices in the paper" would be a good topic for the next Community Ed meeting. Dr. Thomas asked the Health Commission to look at becoming involved in some aspects of Pandemic Flu planning, including community education and working with Public Health to put together a volunteer medical reserve core. Commissioner Horne referred to a copy of the Agricultural Biotechnology brochure from UC Davis. She suggested that copies could be made available to the public through the libraries.</p>		
9. PROSPECTIVE FUTURE ITEMS	<p>Next meeting will be on Thursday, June 8, 2006 (this is a departure from the regularly scheduled meeting date).</p> <p>July: Retreat – include discussion of County Health Status Profiles</p> <p>August: GMO Task Force Final Report (possible action) SB 840 (this could be scheduled at a later date) Paradox in Paradise Report (Joel Diringer) Stop Smoking Services (moved from June agenda)</p> <p>Sept: Agroterrorism Planning Update</p>		
10. ADJOURNMENT	Motion to adjourn at 8:55 P.M.		Odell/Horne/All